1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

roos,[3] wildfowl, and other game, keen eyesight is essential, hence Tiwi men did very little hunting once they were past about forty-five, though they hated to admit their hunting days were over. The meat, fish, and game provided for the large household of an old man was obtained by the young men, and this was about the only thing an old man thought his sons or his step-sons were good for. Typically the young man, when he returned at nightfall with a kangaroo which he had spent most of the day tracking down and spearing, would ignore the old man and dump the carcass at the feet of his mother as if to say, "I brought this back for you, not for that old So and So."

As the women straggled back to camp toward sundown with the results of their day's gathering and the young hunters brought in their bags, cooking began and the main meal of the day (usually the only hot meal) was eaten. The Tiwi themselves had no doubt about the close relationship between plural marriage and good eating. "If I had only one or two wives I would starve," the head of a large household once told the missionary who was preaching against plural marriage, "but with my present ten or twelve wives I can send them out in all directions in the morning and at least two or three of them are likely to bring something back with them at the end of the day, and then we can all eat." This was a realistic appraisal of the economic situation and it is to be noted that he put the emphasis on the food obtained by the women gatherers rather than that supplied by the male hunters. Based on the observations of 1928-29, it would appear that the Tiwi ate pretty well, especially in the larger households. Kangaroo and other marsupials, and some of the larger lizards (for example, the goanna) were very plentiful in the bush, as were fish and turtles and dugong on the coasts and wild geese in many districts. But all these were extras or dividends; the staple everyday foods were the vegetable foods gathered day after day in apparently unending quantities by the women. For most months of the year there was always plenty of *kwoka*, a porridgelike dish prepared by soaking and mashing the small nuts of a native palm. These nuts grew in such quantity that in every large camp baskets or dishes of *kwoka*, at various stages of preparation, were always available, even for midnight snacks if anybody woke up hungry. *Kwoka* was about as dull and tasteless as Scotch porridge, but equally filling, and naked small boys full of *kwoka* had stomachs distended like balloons. In the wet season the place of *kwoka* was taken by *kolema*, a yam whose ripening and growing season was much shorter than that of the nuts from which *kwoka* was made. It was on the abundance of the *kolema* yams during January and February that the Tiwi supported the more elaborate of their collective ceremonials.

The abundance of these and other vegetable foods, plus the ample supply of game and fish in many places, meant that under aboriginal conditions the Tiwi lived at a food-consumption level much further above the near-

[3] Actually there are no kangaroos on Melville and Bathurst Islands; the chief meat animal is a slightly smaller species of marsupial technically called the wallaby. As the distinction is important only to zoologists, and as many of the so-called kangaroos in American zoos are in fact wallabies, we prefer to use the more familiar word.

1: Hart & Pilling E-5 (1928-1954) 1960
OI20 Tiwi OI20

staged and this was usually sufficient to incapacitate the offender and make him decide to move—at least for a while—into some other district. The group thus hastily convened to mete out public justice seldom numbered more than sixty or seventy people (seven or eight households) and having been convened *ad hoc* would remain camped together only for the forty-eight hours or less needed to deal with the emergency.

Joint Activities

This discussion of the alternative lines of action open to an outraged household head enables us to specify the relatively rare occasions during the year when the dull, quiet, day-by-day, food-gathering routines of the dispersed household camps were interrupted by events that required many households to gather together in one place and indulge in joint action. Foremost among these occasions were big funerals and the *kolema* ceremonial, both of which were mentioned above. These were the main religious events of the year, full of dancing, singing, wailing, and excitement. The excitement was the psychological result of so many people being together at the same time, a rare experience in the life of any Tiwi. Since the *kolema* ceremonial was an annual event and even the most enthusiastic funeral goer did not attend more than three or four really big funerals in the course of a year, we may reckon that even an old and important man, much concerned with ritual observances, would probably find himself a participant in such crowd activities on not more than some six occasions per year. For less important men and for women and children the number of such occasions was less than six. The *kolema* ceremonial lasted two weeks or more, big funerals, even when they became the occasion for carrying on other public business, did not last more than four or five days each. Hence we may reckon an average of about a week each for the half-dozen times a really big man spent in the company of a sizable crowd of fellow tribesmen, giving a total annual average of about six or seven weeks at most out of every fifty-two—or a little less than 10 percent of the year spent by an old important man in large ceremonial activities or what Durkheim calls the collective life of the tribe.

In addition there were the smaller gatherings, such as the funerals of younger men and most women, and the calling together of a number of households to settle a dispute in the manner we have described above. These were collective occasions also but they brought together a considerably smaller crowd. A really big man's funeral was likely to draw over three hundred people or even as much as one-third of the whole tribe.[4] Not only did many

[4] Tamboo's funeral in May, 1929 (he died in the previous August) drew practically the full band membership (men, women, and children) of the four Bathurst Island bands; almost all the Munupula; many Mandiimbula; and large delegations from the remaining three bands. With such a crowd, an actual head count was difficult, especially of the children, but there must have been over four hundred people present. Needless to say, excitement was intense; more fights occurred, more insults were exchanged, more ancient feuds revived and new ones started, and more food consumed than at any funeral in living memory. At least that was the opinion of Tamboo's chief mourners, but since it was they who threw the party and had to pay for it, they may have been biased.

2: Mountford E-5 (1954) 1958
OI20 Tiwi OI20

women by *d*, to a place, *n*, where they painted one another for the final *pukumani* rituals. 532x 773

Whilst there, the fish-men engaged in the spear-throwing contest mentioned in the myth.[96] Their footmarks are in circle, *n*, and the places where the spears fell at *p*. *Pipinjawari*, who stood behind the others at *g*, threw his spear the furthest, a large eucalyptus tree, *h*, being the transformed spear. The spears of the other fish-men at *p* are smaller eucalyptus trees.

When everyone had finished decorating themselves, both men and women moved to *m*, where the burial poles had been erected around the grave, the women again reaching their destination by a different path, *k*. It was at the completion of these rituals that the fish-men quarrelled with *Pipinjawari* because he refused to give the "workers" presents for their duties.

5. THE CLOSE OF THE CREATION PERIOD

The escape of *Pipinjawari*, which brought the *palaneri* (creation period) to a close, was the signal for the mythical people to return to their camps and to transform themselves into the various birds, fish, reptiles, heavenly bodies and inanimate objects of today. 773

Tjapara, the moon-man, rose into the sky, his face and body deeply scarred with the wounds he had received in his quarrel with *Purukupali*. [821]

Bima, his lover, and the mother of the dead child, *Djimini*, still bearing the mark on her head where *Purukupali* had struck her with his throwing stick, [825] became the curlew (*Numenius cyanopus*) which still roams the forest at night, wailing in remorse for her misdeeds and for the child she lost.

Wurinpranala, one of the daughters of the original creator, *Mudungkala*, changed herself into the sun-woman, who travels across the sky carrying the [821] torch of blazing bark given to her by *Purukupali*. The *Maludaianini* men, with the ceremonial paint still on their bodies, became that sparkling galaxy, the Milky Way.

Tukimbini, the grandson of *Murupiangkala*, instructed the mythical people (many of whom were his wives and relatives), to establish a totemic place at their old camps on Melville and Bathurst Islands to create the aboriginal foods belonging to each place, and then to change themselves into the particular bird, reptile, fish or inanimate object with which that locality is now associated.

[96] At a *pukumani* ceremony we witnessed at Melville Island, one of the Bathurst Islanders, *Jilimpilalani*, impersonating *Pipinjawari*, threw sticks, as spears, over the men carrying the poles to the grave, chanting "*Kuniprak wunikali kurinari*", meaning "We throw spears to find out who goes furthest." [796]

9:Harney & Elkin E-4, 5 (ca. 1940) 1943 OI20 Tiwi OI20

582 601 [614]

All those in number one group belong to the same clan, and are "opposite" to those of number two group, who also belong to one clan. The lines A, B, C and D are intermarrying groups, i.e. Ego marries his *yabunaiya*, etc.

Of course, relationship terms also include others denoting the type of relation or blood tie. For instance, a mother's brother or a sister's son (group) when distantly related to Ego could be his father-in-law and would then be called *YUNARENIWA*. A true father is *ERINGANI*, a father's sister, *yananiya*; father's father *ARMINI*; father's mother, *arnma*; mother's brother's own daughter, *yamuina*, and one son, *YAMUWANINI*[4]; half brother is *INGULAƷINI* and a half-sister *inguleba*.[5]

582

This system of marriage is not unlike the Murngin and Anula system and also is the same as the *wadji wadji* (wrong side marriage) of the Mudbara. In one, cross-cousins—not *inguleba*—can marry, while in the true Mudbara cross-cousin marriage is prohibited.

796

Rites. The rituals centre around the Kulama. The underlying principle of this is to ensure that the Kulama (a small hot yam that embodies the spirit of the "old woman" and guardian of the horde) is cooked correctly, for this ensures her protection against Maradji, the rainbow snake, another old woman who can cause evil to come upon them and "swallow them" up. It is performed during the wet season by each family, and is said to bring about a plentiful supply of food. The Kulama is also used to pass the initiates, both male and female, from a lower to a higher order in the social scale, although I myself could not see that any important results were obtained by the initiates through the ritual.[6]

[561]

[751]

Some result, or at least protection, however, is obtained: if the Kulama is not sung or danced at the prescribed time or place, the Marakarti (spear grass) and also the ring used for cooking the Kulama yams at the ritual, would give rise to a poison, *Tani*, which would pass into the air and cause sickness; perhaps a youth who had not passed through the Kulama would sicken and die. On the other hand, a youth who has passed through the ritual may gain a certain satisfaction by believing that he can drive the sickness away and protect the family. In addition, the Kulama is not only an increase ritual for yams; in it the father also "sings" the name of his child in a form of song, *apa*, and foretells in a dream that a certain spirit "shade" will be incarnated through one of his wives at some future date; for these children are waiting at that "spirit dreaming" place called Bilawuwi. In other words, it is a human increase ritual.

[842]

[4] These are true cousins and cannot marry.

[5] This *inguleba* native is the term for persons who are taboo to Ego; they cannot approach Ego's wives, as their sweat must not touch. They are people who are "out of line" in relationship. For instance, if a Kudjarli man marries two women, one a Tukambani and the other a Mintui, his children would be of two different *pubui* or totems. These children, half-brothers and half-sisters, are *inguleba* to each other.

[6] It is unlike the Karawadi of the subincised people, in which the initiate is freed of certain food taboos, and again in the Kudidjingara, through which the old men receive magical power to levy tribute from the young people of the tribe, who have not passed through that ritual.

9:Harney & Elkin E-4, 5 (ca. 1940)1943 OI20 Tiwi OI20

An interesting thing in the Kulama is that at that ritual a man must not touch his wives or children, because a deadly sweat called *kilamini* comes from his body and will cause any of his nearest who touch it to die.[7]

Another small ritual is the Miringaleta, a puberty custom for girls; it is connected with the Rainbow snake and is also a marriage ceremony. Last of all comes the Pukamane, a death ritual, the purpose of which is to "lay the shade," *eminkɔ*, of the deceased person and send it back to its clan centre from its wandering around the bush in an endless "walkabout."[8] The "shade" is said to leave the body after a period when the joints begin to crack (the natives call this *Yatarahɔ*); it then immediately hurries to the various camps, emitting a strange cry, "oom—oom." By this sound—the cry of a night bird—the natives know a person has died.

Culture Heroes. They have culture heroes: Purakapale and with him are the "dream time" heroes, Mudarti (the Kurakun of the subincized people), the wedge-tailed hawk, and numerous others all linked together in the legends of long ago; Kuparani, the frill necked lizard and his sister Ikaikgini, the black cockatoo, are characters in the incest tales.

There are also heroes who produced things and turned into animal form, Irakapa, the alligator, the maker and "boss" of the ceremonial spear—*Tumerɔkɔ*. Rokama, the mosquito, the headman of the ordinary mangrove spear (*Orati*) which is used for everyday work. In making this he copied the speargrass, *Marakarti*.

The Present Day Spirits. Some spirits vitally affect their present lives. Papinowari, or Lamparapari, the destroyer—expressing in a milder form the *Kadaitja* theory of the central natives. Kala is also an ordinary spirit, in fact a shade of a departed native of prowess in the past, who is on the "walkabout." Barminuar is a quaint elusive spirit—an island Peter Pan—who never grows old, and is about the size of a small boy. He is always up to mischief; many tales are recounted of natives meeting with him and always finding him "too clever." In one place they showed me a tree where such a spirit had entered, not through a hole in the trunk, but had just passed through it, splitting it open; the split is there now.[9] The rain spirit is Pakadringa. The lightning is caused by his wife Bumarali, whose axe splits the trees. His other wife, Tomakaka, is the monsoon and when it begins the natives know it is she by the sighs (the hiss of the wind in those rains).

Magic. Their magic is somewhat the same as in other tribes. The idea differs slightly in that with them the aim is to bring the destroyer, Lamparapari, upon the victim. This is done by burning a piece of blood—a hard piece which has dried up—and letting the wind carry the smell to the victim. The latter becomes affected because Lamparapari is attracted by this smell and sucks out his blood.

[7] The name for ordinary sweat is *kulumpara*. It is interesting to compare the Anula belief; if a person is sung with magic, a white exudation appears on the skin, with deadly effect.

[8] These people have no idea of reincarnation; in their view, a spirit is eternal but is never reborn.

[9] Trees often burst like this owing to being hollow and full of water or dirt, the pressure of which bursts them open. This could have given rise to the story.

11: Goodale
● 796

OI20 Tiwi OI20

[For a discussion of the Kulama ceremony of initiation into adulthood see category 116, pp. 10-17.]